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ABSTRACT

English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) students and their American peers, teachers, and community leaders can appreciate cultural differences at a school International Day. Guided by their teachers, students can benefit from improving their communication, organizational, and research skills as they plan the event. Compositions help students organize their thoughts on the kinds of activities to include, items to be brought from home, types of entertainment, and other jobs. Four committees can focus the activities: Invitations and Souvenirs, Cooking, Performing, and Decorations. Responsibilities of each committee are described, along with suggestions for compositions that evaluate the event afterwards. (LB)

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ENHANCING SELF-IMAGE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:

"International Day"

Lindy Lopez-Butner
Poster Session
International Reading Assoc.
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ENHANCING SELF-IMAGE OF
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
"International Day"

ESOL students and their American peers, teachers and community leaders can learn and enjoy sharing the riches of cultural differences in an International Day.

Although higher-grade students bring a greater wealth of cultural background to the classroom, the following activities can easily be adapted to younger ones.

Some of the skills used in the planning and implementing of International Day are:

-communicating ideas logically and clearly, orally and in writing,

-using cooperative group-work and social skills,

-recognizing differences in cultural overtones between countries,

-using reference materials effectively,

-developing positive criticism techniques.

The teacher should first check a time and place that are available and convenient.

At this planning stage, ESOL students discuss International Day at home, then they may share their ideas in small groups at school and afterwards with the class.

Compositions of at least five paragraphs help them organize their thoughts into a main idea and details. Questions to prompt compositions should include:

-What kinds of activities should be included in International Day?

-What things can you bring from home to use for International Day? (tapes, clothes, books, posters, etc.)

-What kind of entertainment could you or someone in your family perform? (sing, dance, tell story, play game)

-What other jobs could you do? (make decorations, cook, set up booths, clean up, draw, etc.)

Some beginning ESOL students may need to have their thoughts transcribed by a more advanced peer. These compositions are to be shared with all other students involved in International Day. Then, four committees are organized: Invitations and Souvenirs; Cooking; Performing; Decorations.

INVITATIONS AND SOUVENIRS:

The teacher may ask the high school Graphic Arts department to print invitations that include a program and place, time and date. Leave room on the front to allow students to draw typical international scenes or write foreign words.

As part of the program, the school lunch period should be used for the International Lunch. Adults only should be invited to the lunch if it consists of a sampling of foods which could not accomodate the student body. However, if a sale of dessert or finger food items is allowed in the lunchroom during the lunch hour, plans should be made to project how much would be needed.

The morning hours can be used for performances and displays. The afternoon hours are best used for displays and paper-folding or story-telling sessions, not focused performances because the students will be tired.

The Invitations and Souvenirs Committee send invitations to teachers, principals of other schools, parents, local newspapers and other community leaders. They are the public relations representatives so they should make sure to invite people in the community who have taken a special interest in the school.

Souvenirs must be colorful, small and inexpensive to make. Suggested souvenirs are: bookmarks with foreign language phrases, paper-folded animals and objects, simple hand-held games. Instructions for the paper-folding can be found in the school library. Instructions for the games can be found in Games of the World; Swiss Committee for UNICEF; 1982. There are regional offices for UNICEF in major cities. Large quantities are needed to give to teachers and a few to each class. Committee members are in charge of making, storing and planning the distribution of the souvenirs during International Day.

COOKING:

ESOL students ask their parents or friends to dictate a recipe of a typical dish. Then, they must translate the recipe.

Translating a recipe into English is often difficult because of differences in measurements and because some of the ingredients may not be easily translatable. It is profitable exercise, however, to provide ample time for the students to ask at the farmer's market or look in cookbooks and produce as faithful a translation as possible. If any terms finally prove "untranslatable", allow students to transcribe them from their language and write a footnote to explain the physical characteristics of the product and where it can be purchased. Copies of these recipes should be made for the lunch guests.

Funds may be available from a school club to reimburse students who have receipts. Check with administrative personnel.

The cooking students must provide their own transportations if school buses don't allow these items on board. A designated place such as the Home Ec. room or the cafeteria should be used to store these dishes until time for their use.

Art paper can be used to cover the lunch tables and a few souvenirs as a centerpiece. Unused samples of the unusual ingredients should be brought for display or as part of the centerpiece.

Committee members must be ready to answer any questions the lunch guests may have. They must serve the food and clean up afterwards. They also must remember to bring paper plates, napkins, flatware, paper cups, trash bags, and ice. A soft drink like Kool-Aid can be served from pitchers or punch bowls.

DECORATIONS

This committee uses its artistic talent to create background, booths, other kinds of displays, and placing them decoratively at the site.

International flags can be made of construction paper or cloth. Representative posters can be made or acquired from travel agencies and embassies. Figurines, paper lanterns, streamers, can be made with crepe or construction paper. Each country represented should have a poster board with its name.

Regular manila folders can be used to create learning activities. For example, a folder can be titled: "Spanish to English". Inside, some English words on the folder can be matched to the Spanish words on the cards. Answer keys should be on the back of each folder.

School libraries have books with decorating ideas. Ample amounts of supplies need to be furnished. Committee members may ask other students and even friends and neighbors for books, newspapers, clothes and other artifacts to put on display.

All ESOL students should be assigned to draw a picture on a regular-size sheet of a typical scene of their country (a holiday, wedding, countryside, etc.). They should write two or three sentences describing the scene, identify their art work with their name and their country of origin.

These drawings can be graded then used by the Decorating Committee to glue on art paper or bulletin boards at the site. They should also decorate the front lobby or hallway to guide the guests to the site.

Decorators go to the site the day before International Day to decorate and set up the booths and the lunch table. They are also in charge of checking out all A-V equipment needed and placing everything and overseeing the use and return of these items.

PERFORMING

This committee will be in the limelight and receive more collective attention.

A variety of activities should be planned: home-made games, typical dances, telling of folktales, skits, presentations of interesting aspects of their cultures. Copies of the stories or instructions for the games can be made. Some of the performers must be master presenters and have a detailed written introduction, following this outline: introduce self, tell title of the performance, introduce each performer, tell background information about the performance or performer(s) (what country it represents, on what occasions it is used, what clothing is typically used). These details should be discussed with performers in advance.

All Performing Committee members must sign up for their chosen performance, rehearse it many times, bring any props or costumes needed, and finally go through with the performance. Backing out of the performance at the last minute will mean a bad grade. They must understand that the group depends on them to do a good job as part of a team and backing out creates a weak group attitude which influences the quality of the performance.

The teacher must preview the performances to avoid any questionable, incorrect or redundancies. However, creativity need not be stifled. Offer constructive suggestions and overlook imperfections.

Collaboration among all students and across all committees is essential for success. They may help each other with ideas and borrow items but their grade is based on their committee work.

As the date approaches, all students are envisioning the outcome. A composition at this time will help them imagine their work more concretely - formulate general ideas on the work of each committee and define more specifically the job of their own committee. Suggested questions for prompting this exercise are:

-What are each committee's responsibilities?

-What are your individual responsibilities?

-What will you wear, what will you bring?

-What do you think the teacher should do on International Day?

Beginning students may want to draw pictures to answer these questions.

On the day after International Day students may write a composition for self-evaluation. Questions to ask may be:

-Which five activities were most successful and which were the least successful? Why?

-What changes would you make for the next International Day?

Finally, use photos, invitations, and any other items to make a scrapbook. Future students will enjoy seeing their predecessors in action and will gain a clear understanding of what International Day is all about!

International Day is a delightful, educational show-and-tell which offers an optimum opportunity for students to learn more about each other's backgrounds.